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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/572,893	03/20/2006	Fufang Zha	2003P87075WOUS	2949
28524 7590 10/21/2008 SIEMENS CORPORATION INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT 170 WOOD AVENUE SOUTH ISELIN, NJ 08830			EXAMINER MENON, KRISHNAN S	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1797	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			10/21/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/572,893

Applicant(s)

ZHA ET AL.

Examiner

Krishnan S. Menon

Art Unit

1797

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 March 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 13-18 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 19-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF-100)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/17/07; 11/30/07
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-12 and 19-23, drawn to a method of filtration.

Group II, claim(s) 13-18, drawn to a system for filtration.

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: the technical feature, the filter back-wash with permeate, is well known in the art, and there is no special technical feature linking these groups of claims.

During a telephone conversation with Pasquale Musacchio on 10/14/08 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of group I, claims 1-12 and 19-23. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 13-18 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim

remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-12 and 19-23 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over the pending process claims of copending Application Numbers as shown below. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant application claims the limitations claimed in these reference applications.

11/179,391: Claims 1-4,6,7,9-11,13-19

11/316,593: Claims 1-18,20-25,30

11/574,819: Claims 1-10

11/912,859: Claims 1-25

10/569,565: Claims 15-40

10/774,041: Claims 1-25.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

1. Claims 19-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over, Sunaoka et al (5,209,852).

These claims recite:

- (1) backwashing, scouring and/or cleaning step; scouring step includes gas bubbles
- (2) partial or full sweep or drain down during or after the backwash
- (3) use of pressurized gas for the sweep or drain down
- (4) flushing the waste containing liquid with feed liquid

Sunaoka teaches in column 1, under "Prior Art" (line 14), scouring the membrane (scrubbing) with gas bubbles, backwash before, during or after scouring, and drain down. Sunaoka teaches draining by charging compressed air - see column 6, lines 63-68. Sunaoka teaches in column 8, line 63 - column 9, line 21, blow down of the wastewater from the tank using water head or compressed air, as well as secondary washing after the blow-down.

2. Claims 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith (US 5,403,479).

Smith teaches backwashing the membrane as claimed under low pressure and pulsed flow with, among other options, permeate liquid – see column 11, lines 20-61 and the figures. Pressure applied is below the bubble point (line 30 at column 11).

3. Claims 1-12 and 19-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Smith and Sunaoka.

Smith teaches low pressure that is below the bubble point for backwashing of the membranes as shown above in paragraph 2.

Sunaoka teaches filtering, scouring with air bubbles, backwashing, blow-down draining, and secondary washing of the membrane as shown in paragraph 1 above. Sunaoka also teaches using compressed air to effect backwash – see column 10, lines 58-64. Also, using compressed air to effect pumping of liquids, and particularly, for backwashing filters and membranes is well known in the art.

It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of these references to arrive at the process recited in the claims because it would be obvious to use known process steps such as using compressed air to effect fluid flow to backwash the membrane, the backwash pressure being sufficient to make the liquid flow as taught by Smith and Sunaoka in the process of filtering, scouring the membrane and draining as taught by Sunaoka; results of such steps being only predictable. One would use the teachings of Smith for the backwashing steps in the teaching of Sunaoka

because it is highly effective according to Smith (column 11, lines 1-3), and one would use the teaching of Sunaoka in the teaching of Smith to drain the tank and get rid of the accumulated waste especially in batch and semi-continuous operations.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Krishnan S. Menon whose telephone number is 571-272-1143. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David R. Sample can be reached on 571-272-1376. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Krishnan S Menon/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797